

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 PARIS 13874 111514Z  
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W  
-----120445Z 017381 /13

R 111502Z MAY 77  
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2688  
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
AMEMBASSY BANGKOK  
AMCONSUL HONG KONG  
USLO PEKING

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 13874

EXDIS

E.O.11652: XGDS-1  
TAGS: PFOR VN FR US UR CH  
SUBJ: SOVIET AND CHINESE REACTIONS TO FRENCH AID TO  
VIETNAM

REF: (A) PEKING 0890, (B) PEKING 0903

1. QUAI DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR ASIA DOPFFER TOLD EMBOFF  
THAT THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR TO FRANCE HAD CALLED ON THE  
QUAI AT A HIGH LEVEL TO EXPRESS HIS GOVERNMENT'S  
SATISFACTION WITH THE FRENCH RECEPTION OF PHAM VAN DONG,  
THE IMPROVEMENT IN FRANCO/VIETNAMESE RELATIONS, AND  
FRENCH AID TO VIETNAM. THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR IN HANOI  
HAD MADE A SIMILAR DEMARCHE. DOPFFER SAID THAT THE QUAI  
HAD NOT YET DECIDED WHETHER IT SHOULD TAKE THESE  
CONVERSATIONS AT FACE VALUE.

2. DOPFFER SAID THAT IT WAS ALSO TRUE THAT IN HANOI IN  
PARTICULAR, SOME OF THE SOVIETS HAD BEEN ABUSIVE,  
INSULTING AND CRUDE TO THE FRENCH. IN VERY COARSE  
TERMS THE FRENCH HAD BEEN CALLED FILTHY COLONIALISTS,  
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WHO HAD NO FUTURE IN INDOCHINA, WHO WERE IMPOTENT AT  
HOME AS WELL AS IN ASIA. ONE SAID THE SOVIET ARMY  
COULD MARCH THROUGH FRANCE TO THE ATLANTIC IN TWO DAYS.  
THE FRENCH HAD ALSO LEARNED, SECOND HAND THIS TIME, THAT  
THE SOVIETS HAD EXPRESSED SIMILARLY NEGATIVE SENTIMENTS  
ABOUT THE US AND ITS "NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS" WITH  
VIETNAM. DOPFFER OPINED THAT THE SOVIETS WOULD NOT

HAVE DARED TO EXPRESS SUCH VIEWS TO THE VIETNAMESE, WHO WOULD HAVE REACTED SHARPLY, PUTTING THE SOVIETS IN THEIR PLACE. HE THOUGHT THAT ALTHOUGH THE VIETNAMESE NEEDED THE SOVIETS, THE SOVIETS NEEDED THE VIETNAMESE EVEN MORE: VIETNAM WAS THEIR ONLY HOLDING IN THAT PART OF ASIA. DOPFFER SAID THE QUAI WAS PUZZLED BY THESE VERY CONTRARY ACTIONS AND WONDERED WHETHER THEY MIGHT BE MERELY THE PERSONAL REACTION OF INDIVIDUAL DIPLOMATS. THE FRENCH HAD MERELY REBUKED THESE SOVIETS FOR THE USE OF UNDIPLOMATIC LANGUAGE.

3. DOPFFER SAID THAT UNLIKE THE MIXED SOVIET RESPONSE THE CHINESE HAVE BEEN UNIFORMLY CONGRATULATORY ABOUT THE IMPROVEMENT IN FRANCO/VIETNAMESE RELATIONS, AND HAVE EVEN EXPRESSED GREAT SATISFACTION CONCERNING THE US/SRV TALKS IN PARIS.

4. DOPFFER WAS PARTICULARLY SURPRISED BY THE ANTI-FRENCH ARTICLE WRITTEN BY WILFRED BURCHETT FOR THE MAY 6 FAR EASTERN ECONOMIC REVIEW. BURCHETT'S THESIS THAT THE VIETNAMESE WERE BASING THEIR REAL HOPES ON US RATHER THAN FRENCH AID DID NOT APPEAR TO BE THE HANOI LINE, AND HE SAW NO REASON WHY BURCHETT SHOULD PUSH AN ANTI-FRENCH LINE ON HIS OWN.

5. ACCORDING TO DOPFFER, THE QUAI IS WITHHOLDING ITS JUDGMENT CONCERNING MOSCOW'S REAL REACTION TO HANOI'S OVERTURES TO THE WEST, BUT IT IS BASICALLY INCLINED TO THINK THAT THE USSR WAS NOT OPPOSED TO SOME FRENCH AID, CONFIDENTIAL

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WHICH RELIEVED THE USSR OF SOME OF ITS BURDEN WHILE NOT CHANGING BASICALLY THE SOVIET POLITICO/MILITARY PRIMACY. THE QUAI THOUGHT THAT PEKING PROBABLY NOW SAW FRENCH AND US AID AS A MEANS OF REDUCING HANOI'S RELIANCE ON MOSCOW, BUT THAT THE CHINESE REACTION MIGHT BE MORE AMBIGUOUS LATER IF A STRENGTHENED VIETNAM PLAYED A REGIONAL ROLE CONTRARY TO CHINESE INTERESTS IN THE AREA.  
GAMMON

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## Message Attributes

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